Amateur radio club to participate in Field Day, encourage others to join

BY JIM PAUL
STAFF INTERN

GREEN BAY – An annual event for amateur radio operators is days away and the Green Bay Mike & Key Club is inviting the community to join in on the fun.

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) Field Day is the most popular on-the-air event held annually throughout the U.S. and Canada.

At the event, amateur radio operators, also known as "Hams," gather to practice emergency radio communications in a field setting to showcase the science and skill of amateur radio – highlighting how reliable amateur radios are under any conditions, from almost any location.

Green Bay Mike & Key Club is hosting its own field day event set for Saturday, June 25, and Sunday, June 26, at Pine Tree Park in Hobart.

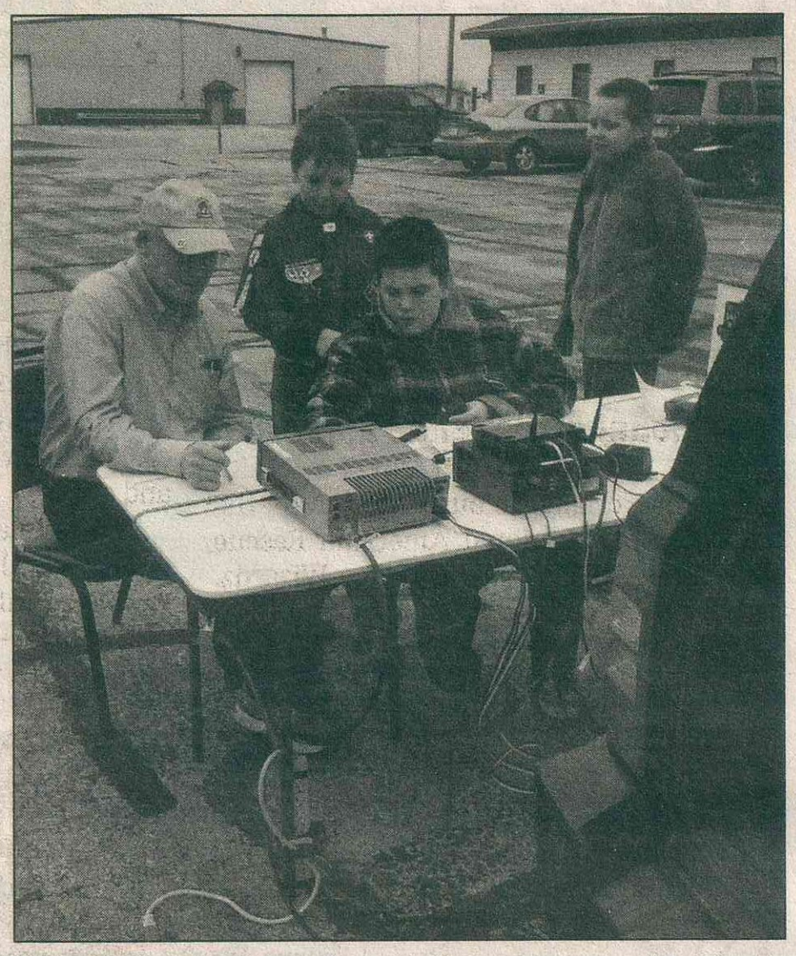
Club member David Catalano said the weekend-long event is a great way to check out and maybe even try out amateur radio operating.

He said the hobby isn't very expensive, with handheld devices needed to get started selling for around $30.

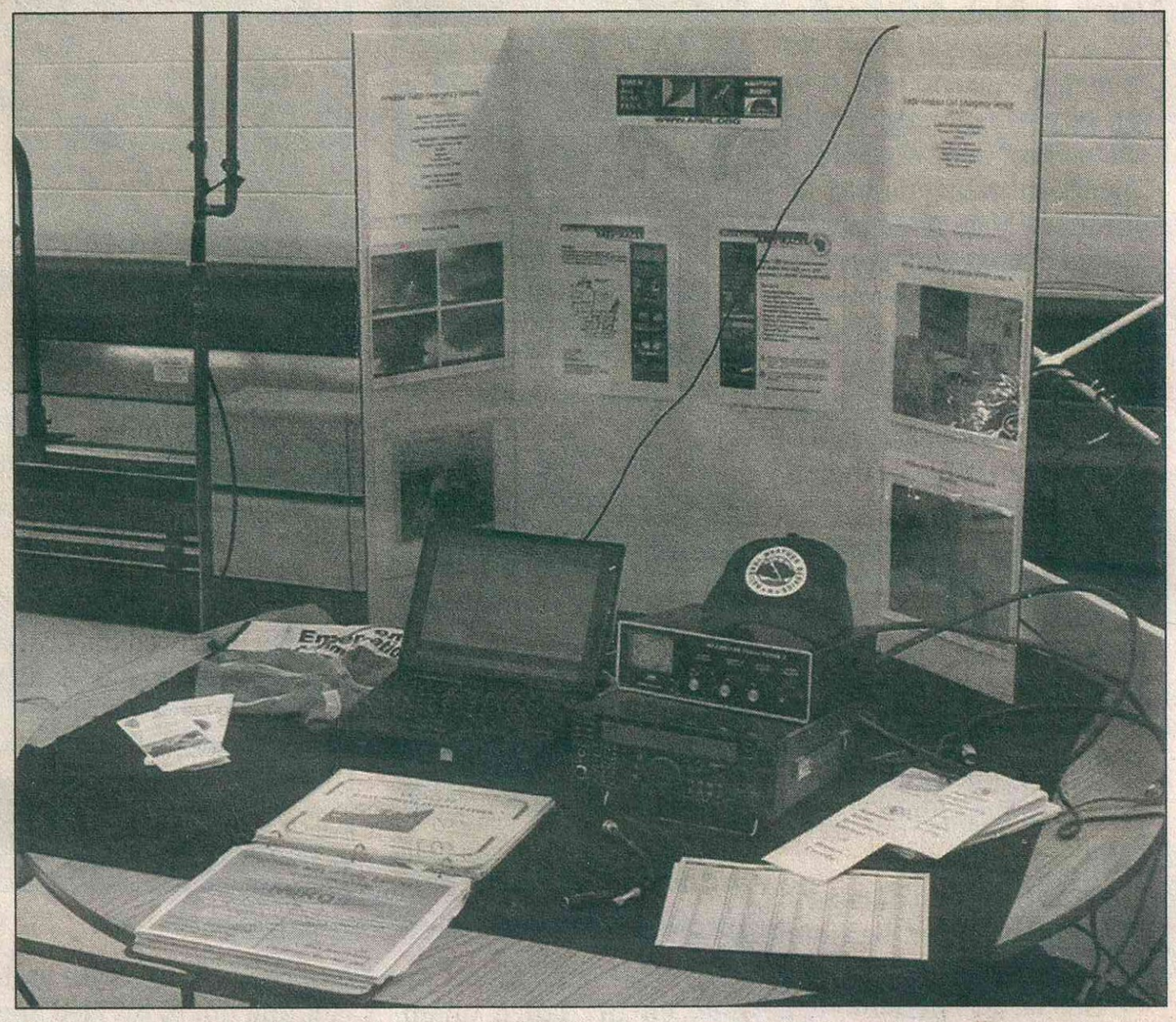
Catalano said at this weekend's event, the club will be out in full force – joining the more than 40,000 amateur radio operators throughout North America setting up temporary transmitting stations.

He said ARRL Field Day combines public service, emergency preparedness, community outreach and technical skills all in a single event.

Started in 1933, Field Day remains the most popular event in ham radio.



The Green Bay Mike & Key Club, a community service organization and club for those interested in amateur radio, is open to all ages.
Submitted Photos



The Green Bay Mike & Key Club offers licensing classes to help newcomers get their operator's license from the Federal Communications Commission.

About the club

Catalano said the Green Bay Mike & Key Club has been in existence since 1939, and currently boasts more than 95 members from all walks of life – male and female, young and old.

The club meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at the G.M. Science Building of St. Norbert's College in De Pere.

Catalano said club members are devoted to their hobby and welcome opportunities to help anyone interested in learning more about amateur radio.

He said the club is made up of members who hold all available amateur radio license classes – including technician, general and Amateur extra – each of which carries various operating privileges and frequencies.

Catalano said the Green Bay Mike & Key Club regularly offers licensing classes to prepare newcomers for their initial amateur radio examination to get their operator's license from the Federal Communications Commission, or to help current amateurs upgrade their licenses.

"We have volunteer examiners in our club to provide the testing in order for them to get licensed," he said.

In addition to being able to communicate with people all over the country and beyond, Catalano said the Green Bay Mike & Key Club provides many services to members and hosts a handful of events throughout the year.

Earlier this month, the club brought back a club-favorite – Green Bay 1st Annual Hamfest, which featured food, indoor/outdoor sales, ham license testing and more.

Catalano said the first Green Bay Hamfest was held in 1976, and the last Hamfest, before the 2022 revamp, was in the 1990s.

The Green Bay Mike & Key Club is also active in emergency preparation.

"We provide information to Skywarn as we know sirens go off every Wednesday, as you all know here in the Green Bay Brown County area," Catalano said. "And on the second Wednesday of the month, a bunch of us have a list of 64 sirens here in Brown County and pick certain ones – we have a look at when they were checked last and (log that information)."

He said for those that don't work, the club will provide that information to emergency management.

Catalano said the club also participates in readiness drills at Austin Straubel Airport – providing emergency communications between the buses that are brought in to transport the injured and the hospitals they are being taken to, so the hospitals have an idea of what to expect.

"The club is also active at many community events, such as runs, marathons and bicycle events on the medical side of things," he said. "We'll call from the stations and say, 'we have a guy that can't make it any further, somebody help bring him back to the medical tent.' So we do provide that kind of community communications."

Any questions about the club or the event can be directed to Gene Radtke at garad@aol.com.